1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

is considered in this chapter while the non-*mangala* part is considered in Chapter V.

There are, then, several *mangalas*, of which marriage is one, and at each of these *mangalas*, *mūrta* is performed. *Mūrta* may be regarded as a typical ritual complex. The ritual complex of *mūrta* consists of several ritual acts, and it is proposed to discover the meaning of each of them by the application of the three rules formulated by Professor Radcliffe-Brown. (1) 'When the same or similar custom is practised on different occasions it has the same or a similar meaning in all of them.'[1] (2) 'When different customs are practised on one and the same occasion there is a common element in the customs.'[2] (3) 'If two rites are found associated with one another on different occasions then there is something in common between the different occasions.'[3]

The central figure of a rite is referred to in this book as the subject. But the subject of *mūrta* is referred to as the 'subject of *mangala*' as *mūrta* is always a part of *mangala*. The term has been retained even where the rite in question is peculiar to marriage, as marriage is also a *mangala*, and the term 'subject' is applicable to the bride as well as the groom. It is only when a rite is performed by either the bride or groom exclusively that 'subject' is discarded in favour of either of the former, more specific terms.

II

The astrologer selects an auspicious day for the performance of *mangala*, and an even more auspicious part of that day for the performance of *mūrta*, which is the most important part of *mangala*. It is interesting to note that the Coorg term *mūrta* is the corrupt form of the Sanskrit *mūhurta*, which means a 'particular division of time, the thirtieth part of a day, a period of 48 minutes'.[4]

The house in which the *mangala* ritual takes place is cleaned, and its walls are colour-washed, and a decorated booth (*pandal*) of five pillars, one of which is a branch of a milk-exuding tree, is erected in front of the house. Poleyas and Medas beat tom-toms and play pipes in front of the house, and Coorg youths dance to the music.

[1] *The Andaman Islanders*, Cambridge, 1933 (2nd edition), p. 235.
[2] Ibid., p. 2.
[3] *Taboo*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 36.
[4] Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 825.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Four Coorgs beat the small Coorg drum called '*duḍi*' and sing some traditional songs at various points during *mangala*. These songs give an account of the ritual that is being performed. The singers also sing the 'road song' (*baṭṭé pāṭ*), while conducting the subject of *mangala* from one part of the house to another, and the road song gives a traditionally exaggerated account of everything that is found *en route*. At night, after dinner, Coorg singers sing songs about the groom, bride, their ancestors, and the guests who are present.

The elaborate preparations for *mangala* and the selection of an auspicious day for its performance stress the social importance of the occasion. *Mangala* indicates the movement of the subject from one position in the social structure to another, it marks a change in his social personality. *Mūrta* ritual is the most important part of *mangala*, and, consequently, it is performed during the most auspicious part of the auspicious day, and the subject undergoes a series of preparatory and purificatory rites before sitting down for *mūrta*.

The subject of *mangala*, if male, is ritually shaved by the barber, after which he is given a bath by three women relatives whose husbands are alive.[1] Women whose husbands are alive enjoy a higher ritual and social status than widows. Only an unmarried girl, and a woman whose first and only husband is alive, are entitled to take part in auspicious ritual. Not only widows, but also remarried widows, are excluded from auspicious ritual, but such exclusion is not as thorough among Coorgs as it is, for instance, among the Brahmins.

After a bath, the subject wears ritual garments, and proceeds to the sacred central hall (*nellakki naḍubāḍé*), where all ritual ought to take place, ideally speaking. In the central hall is the sacred tripod stool (*mukkāli* = three-legged) on which the subject sits, and on either side of the stool stands a bell-metal lamp (*kuttum boḷicha*). The subject thrice walks round the tripod stool and lamps, and then salutes the lamps and the tripod stool before sitting down on the latter. Circumambulation is clock-wise in auspicious ritual and anti-clockwise in mourning.

In front of the sitting subject is another such stool covered with a red silk cloth. An earthen lamp burns in a metal dining dish (*taḷi*)

[1] The subject sits on the floor fully clothed while the women relatives pour vesselfuls of hot water on him.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

VI

THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS

I

796 634 THERE is a considerable body of ritual directly referring to the *okka*, but this is not the case when we come to larger social units such as the village (*ūr*), *nāḍ* (each consisting of a few villages), and *sīmé* or *dēsha* (each consisting of a few *nāḍs*). These large social units were never as closely-knit as the *okka*. The festivals of the village-deities constitute an important source of information on these units, even though only a small part of each festival refers directly to them. Of the calendar festivals, only the harvest festival is important. The festivals of the village-deities, the harvest festival, and folklore are the chief sources for this chapter.

624 796 346 776 A 'village-deity' does not necessarily mean the deity of a single village. In fact it is common to find two or three villages combining to celebrate the festival of a village-deity. There is usually more than one deity at the festival of a village-deity. Every temple in a village usually contains more than one deity, one chief deity from whom the temple derives its name, and the rest secondary. For instance, the Kundat Bhadrakāḷi temple in Kuklūr derives its name from the fact that the chief deity in the temple is Bhadrakāḷi. There is a shrine containing her image, and the other deities in this shrine are Gaṇēsha, Sārtāvu (Ayyappa), and a *linga* (representing Shiva) said to have been brought from Benares. Outside the shrine, but inside the temple compound, are stones representing Ayyappa, Pattu Kūṭ Pātāḷa (literally, ten spirits of the underworld), and Kuṭṭatammé (the mother of Kuṭṭa).[1] Besides these, the Poleyas of Kuklūr keep representations of some deities worshipped exclusively by them, outside the temple compound on an improvised platform. All the deities in Kuklūr are considered to be subordinate to Bhadrakāḷi. Very frequently there is more than one temple in a village. In Armēri in Beppunāḍ, for instance, there are

[1] Kuṭṭatammé has a temple to herself in Kuṭṭa in south Coorg. She is a famous deity and an annual festival is held in her honour.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

several temples: one dedicated to Bhagavati, another to Mahādēva, two to Ayyappa, and six to Raktēshwari (identified with Chamuṇḍi). The temples dedicated to Bhagavati, Mahādēva, and Ayyappa have Brahmin priests who worship the deities by using Sanskrit *mantras*, whereas those dedicated to Raktēshwari do not have Brahmin priests, and pigs are sacrificed annually to her. There are two modes of worship, the Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic, and in the festival of a village-deity these two modes are found mixed in varying proportions.

Usually there is more than one temple in a village, and a temple contains more than one deity. The temples in a village might be either Sanskritic or non-Sanskritic, or might represent varying degrees of compromise between the two elements. Finally, a village-deity might also be the deity of more than one village.

The festival of a village-deity requires a certain amount of co-operation between the various temples in a village, and not infrequently between villages. For instance, the festivals of the various deities in a village are so arranged that they do not clash if not actually dovetail. The festivals of the deities Kētrappa and Chaunḍi in Bēngūr occur at the same time, but they dovetail remarkably considering the elaborateness of the ritual that is performed. A kind of offering known as *térémuḍi* (usually a man wearing *téré* equipment) is sent by both the Bhagavati (in common parlance, Povvedi) and Chaunḍi temples to the Kētrappa temple on the eighteenth day (which is also called the *nammé* or 'festival day') of the biennial Kētrappa festival.

A few miles from Bēngūr is Balmāvṭi, which has an important temple dedicated to Bhagavati (Povvedi). This deity also has a very elaborate biennial festival, similar to Kētrappa's, but the interesting point is that the two festivals are performed in alternate years. When the 'big festival' of Kētrappa is being performed, Bhagavati of Balmāvṭi has a 'small festival', and vice versa. That is to say, this arrangement implies some co-operation between Begunāḍ and Ballatnāḍ. This is all the more surprising as formerly there was a feud (*maradalé*) between these two *nāḍs*, and this feud seems to have been a long and bitter one.

There is another type of co-operation to which reference must be made here. The Baṇṇas and Maléyas who officiate as oracles and dancers (wearing *téré*) at the festival of Kētrappa come from the villages Saṇṇa Pulikōṭu and Balmāvti respectively. The services of

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Sārtāvu of Makki is referred to as Makki Sārtāvu, and so on. Frequently, the name by which a deity is popularly known gives no clue as to his Sanskritic affiliations: the deity Pālūrappa is said to be 'really' Vishṇu, but he is ordinarily referred to by the former name. Kuṭṭatammé means the 'Mother of Kuṭṭa' (a village in south Coorg), and this is the name by which the deity is popularly known. The deity's 'real' name is Karīn Kāḷi (Black Kāḷi), who is identified with one of the manifestations or forms of Parvati, wife of Shiva.

But it is not always that the popular name hides the Sanskritic affiliations of a deity: Bhadrakāḷi, Chāmuṇḍi, Povvedi (Bhagavati), Mādēva (Mahādēva), &c., have obvious Sanskritic affiliations, though such affiliations may not be known to all or even most of the devotees.

Nowhere in India are the village-deities regarded as gentle. This applies to Coorg too. The deity Madērappa settles down in the village Madé, and immediately flowers wither, sown seeds fail to sprout, and babies die in cradles. Another village-deity says that she will reward those who propitiate her and shoot an arrow at those who refuse to. In return for propitiation the deities keep away from the village and *nāḍ* epidemics such as plague, cholera, and smallpox, and grant children, good crops, and longevity. They also offer protection from ghosts and minor spirits who possess and harm human beings. The oracle of the deity acts as exorcist at the festival of the deity.

Sanskritic Hinduism, which is also All-India Hinduism, makes out village gods to be manifestations of Shiva, and village goddesses to be manifestations of Shiva's wife, Pārvati. The implications of such a systematization will be considered later.

III

The domestic and temple architecture of Coorgs seems to have been modelled on that of Malabar. This is only natural as most of the artisan castes in Coorg Proper are immigrants from Malabar.

While Coorg houses are extremely substantial structures, temples dedicated to village-deities are usually small and unimpressive buildings. But the well-known temples dedicated to Brahminical or Sanskritic deities are substantial, as formerly rich devotees liked building solid and massive temples for their patron-deities.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

346 Lucky indeed were the deities who could count the Rājas of Coorg as their devotees. The Bhagaṇḍēshwara temple in Bhāgamaṇḍla, Omkārēshwara temple in Mercara, the Kundat Bhadrakāḷi temple in Kuklūr, and many others have benefited from the munificence of the Rājas.

346 793 The construction of a temple is accompanied by elaborate ritual, and the Tantri Brahmins of South Canara are masters of this ritual. The folksongs frequently refer to a Tantri Brahmin being sent for to supervise the performance of the ritual surrounding the construction of a temple. The Tantri himself knows how to set images more firmly in their bases, revivify deities who have lost power, and so on.

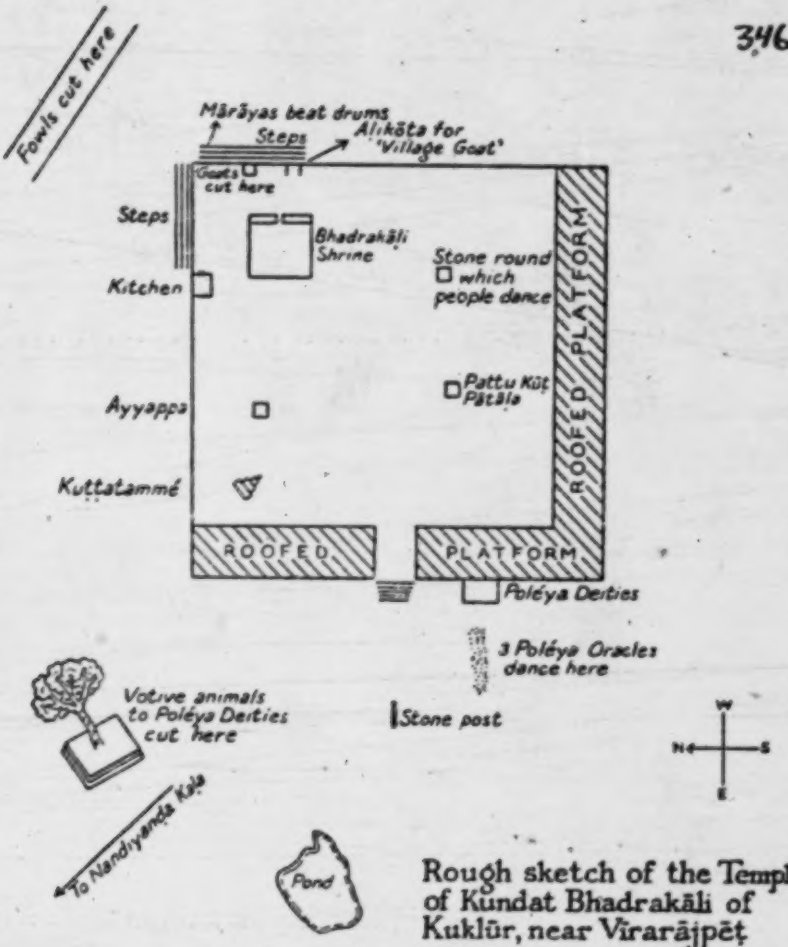
793 796 It is usually a Brahmin from either South Canara or Malabar who is priest at temples dedicated to Bhagavati (Povvedi). Worship is offered to the deity at least once every day in temples where Brahmins are priests. There are, however, temples in which a member of one of the non-Brahmin castes is priest. For instance, a Kannaḍa-speaking Okkaliga is priest at the temple of Kuṭṭatammé in Kuṭṭa; and similarly, the deity Kētrappa has a Coorg priest.

[776] Quite apart from this, in almost every village the very low castes (Mēda and Poleya) have their own deities who are not usually worshipped by the higher castes. The latter refer to such a deity as, for instance, 'Mēdara Ayyappa' (Mēdas' Ayyappa), 'Poleyara dēvaru' (Poleyas' deities), and so on.

The position may be summed up thus: (1) there are first of all temples dedicated to Sanskritic deities, with Brahmin priests, at which only vegetarian offerings are made, and these deities are worshipped by all the high castes.[1] Until recently, Untouchables were not being admitted to such temples. Now, legally, they are entitled to enter them. (2) There are temples where Brahmins are normally priests, the offerings normally vegetarian, and the mode of worship Sanskritic, but on certain occasions such as the festival of the deity the Brahmin withdraws and animals are decapitated before the deity by a non-Brahmin. The Brahmin priest re-enters the temple only after purifying it. (3) Temples where non-Brahmins are priests. Brahmins usually do not have anything to do in such a temple, but lay Brahmins may propitiate such a deity during an

[1] This ignores, however, the distinction into Shaivism and Vaishṇavism, and the fact that the orthodox followers of the one do not generally go to the temples of the other.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5



Rough sketch of the Temple of Kundat Bhadrakāli of Kuklūr, near Vīrarājpēṭ

4. Plan of the temple of Bhadrakāḷi of Kunda

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

585 614 537 ku:ḍu kuṭumba sa:lu beci nindi:ra:. 'People of the district in two parties and relatives in two parties and aruvés, people of the lineages and blood relations, the assembly and the sibs, have you formed lines and stood?'

A member of the bridegroom's party answers: nindi:tu 'they have stood'.

Speaker of bride's party: a:naka ko:daṇḍ(a) okaḍa taṉgammē: nd(u) ēṉṉuvē kannina ku:tiaṇḍ(a) okaḍa ka:|apē: nd(u) ēṉṉuvē baymbēṉgu tandu: bendu: parandītu tapa kovva: nd(u) a:yitu na:|u mu:rta no:ṭitu inde:kēttu dinatulu maṉgula kuricitu indu maṉgul(a) a:ḍi bandalli taṉgammē: nd(u) ēṉṉuvē kannina ka:|apē: nd(u) ēṉṉuvē baymbēṉgu sammanda koḍukanalla.

'If so, in the matter of the girl called Taṉgammē of the Ko:daṇḍa sib and the man called Ka:|apē of the Ku:tiaṇḍa sib, having made an offer of marriage and relationship, having agreed saying that they would give and they would receive, having looked for an auspicious day and moment, and eight days before today having formally arranged the marriage, now today when the marriage procession has come, let us give the girl called Taṉgammē to the man called Ka:|apē, giving her rights in his sib (sammanda).'

Speaker of bridegroom's party: koḍuka.
'Let us give.'

Speaker of bride's party: a:ce:ṉgi ku:tiaṇḍ(a) okaḍa kē:ku nindē gurumane na:lu kō:ṭ(u) aramane ni:ru baḷipē kaṇataru nu:ra:yira baṭṭi [1] bu:mi nu:ru kaṇḍa [2] ba:ṇe upē|a ne:ṉgi noga taye tami allate bu:mir(a) a:ka e:ka e:kaḍ(a) e:ri kuṇḍitere ku:ḍa sammanda koḍutira:.

'If so, of the Ku:tiaṇḍa sib, the ancestors' shrine [3] which stands to the east (of the dwelling-house), the palace (=house) with its four buildings (round the central court), the well where they draw water, the arable land of 100,000 measures, the pasture land of 100 pieces, the plough with which they plough, the yoke, the harrow, the yoke-rope, and besides that, of the arable land the large paddy-field, the paddy-nursery, the banks of the paddy-nursery, the manure-pit, all did you give her as her rights in the sib?'

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[1] More usually a:yira baṭṭi '1000 measures'.
[2] More usually petu kaṇḍa '10 pieces'.
[3] Usually in ordinary speech called kaymaḍa; each original sib-house (aynumane) has such a shrine of its ancestors, supposedly on the site where the first ancestor was buried and frequently enough actually containing a tomb.

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3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AW5 Coorg AW5

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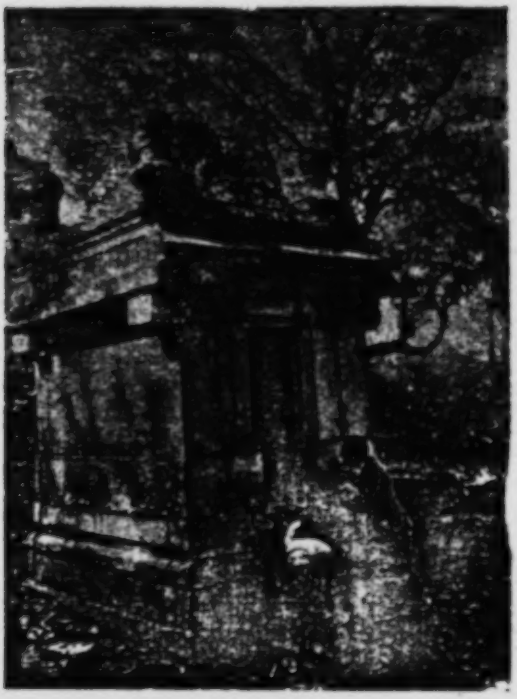
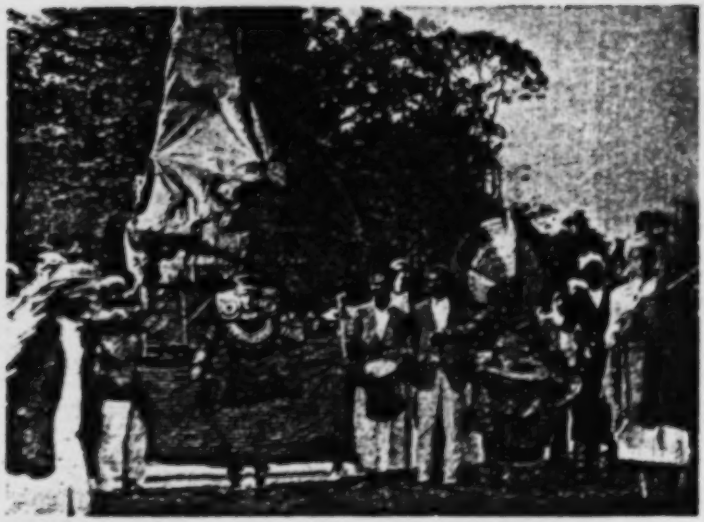


A Coorg Temple (Kaymada)



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A Ghost Mask (Karnakola)

[facing p. 51]

[P 51]

CHAPTER IX

COORG (Contd.)

THE worship of the demons and ancestor-spirits constitutes the religion of the Coorgs. They have been influenced by contact with the Malayali, Canarese, Brahmanical and Lingayat superstitions. The Malayalis have made themselves indispensable at their demon and ancestor worship. The Tulus are their Pujaris. The worship of Mariamman (the smallpox demon) was introduced by the Mysoreans. The domiciled Brahmans of Coorg have succeeded in the introduction of Mahadeva and Subrahmania, and have temples erected and idols set up for worship. The Lingayats or Sivachars are also endeavouring to introduce the worship of Linga. Since the days of Vira Rajendra, Christianity was introduced in Coorg, and there is a Roman Catholic Settlement with a fine church at Virajpet, but Christianity has not made much headway in Coorg. 771 776 177 [797]

Ancestor-Worship

The ancestor-worship of the Coorgs is based on the belief that the spirits of the dead hover inside and outside the Coorg dwellings and cause endless trouble in the absence of adequate propitiation. Each Coorg house has a *Kaimatta* (a building close at hand) under a tree in the fields or in the yard close to the house. This is a raised mud platform where carved stones representing the images of their ancestors are placed. Sacrifices of fowls and pigs are made to them. Sometimes the Coorgs become possessed of the spirits of the dead and express all their desires when they are sumptuously fed and given drink. The spirits of ancestors are believed to hand over their locality and become angry now and then. A male ghost is called *Karana*, and a female one *Sodalachi* or *Karanchi*. 769 [346] [782] [787]

It is a belief among the Coorgs that ghosts cause trouble, and females even more so. The Sodalachis are ever inclined to smite children with sickness and sometimes even the adult males and females of the house. In fact they are ever inclined to do harm. With a view to appease their wrath, rice, arrack, milk and other delicacies are offered on various occasions during the year to them. Once a month, a fowl or two are offered at the *Kaimatta* to please them. In such cases a member of the community becomes possessed. He then puts off his head dress and walks in front of the house in a state of trance. While in this condition, the members of the family appear before him to represent their grievances. He makes some incoherent utterances which are believed to be emanations from one of the ancestors who has not been propitiated with offerings. At once he is treated to meat and drink, and neighbours are allowed to come in and put questions to the possessed. These gifts are called *Karana Baruva*. 769 782 787

Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AW5 Coorg AW5

and the popular song of the Coorg mountaineer does full justice to this sentiment.

(3) Bhagavathi Feast

The Bhagavathi feast has been introduced by the Tulu Brahmins. It takes place two months preceding the monsoon. It is connected with demoniacal possessions, and extends over nine days. Tantri Brahmins, Coorgs and Holeyas have their share in the feast, and votaries disport themselves in their orgies in as noisy a manner as the Ajjala Palyas. The chief object of the feast is the collection of votive offerings to Tantri Brahmins who are an object of dread to the Coorgs.

(4) Devasthana

The Coorg Devasthanas are rude village shrines of mud walls and thatched roof within a gloomy grove. The only ones deserving notice are those at Bhagamandala, Palur, Irupu and Omkareswara Devasthana at Mercara, the latter of which is built in the same Moorish style as the Rajas' tombs.

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4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

grims from Malayálam, Tulu and Mysore repair to the sacred place by thousands. Distinguished amongst these are the Brahmini-widows—those sad figures, clothed with reddish brown garments, one end of which covers the shorn head. A bundle under one arm they trudge along, supported by a stick; perhaps they come by their own impulse, perhaps in the name and for the benefit of some sick relation. The nearer the pilgrims approach the end of their journey, the more frequent and the more numerous are the festive caravans of men, women and children in holiday-costume, who now rest in picturesque groups on the shady banks of streams, now proceed in gay defiles over the grassy hills. With the last ascent of a small elevation near the foot of the Tala-Káveri-hill the view of the upper basin of the Káveri valley, which is rather wide and flanked by steep hills, suddenly bursts upon us. The Bhágamandala temple with its copper roof is conspicuous in the middle of the valley and close to the Káveri. A few rows of houses near it are changed into a busy mart. Thousands of people move to and fro, and the humming noise of the multitude sounds like the distant surf of the ocean. Hundreds are engaged in bathing in the sacred stream before they enter the temple, which forms a large square with an open centre like a Coorg house. Along the road pedlars are squatted behind their paltry wares which are spread under a flimsy awning. Mendicant Sanyásis with hollow sounding conch and brass gong in hand push, blowing and ringing, through the crowd. Hourly the multitude increases; new arrivals descend from all the neighbouring mountain pathways into the valley. Hundreds of people have already proceeded to reach the Káveri source, in order to build for themselves and their expected friends sheltering booths against the cold damp night air. A pathway leads over paddy-fields through steep jungle and over rocky mountain ridges to the sacred spot. As they ascend, they shout "Náráyana, Oh!

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

Náráyana" and the echo is taken up by succeeding caravans. Near the summit there is an overhanging rock, called Bíma-kallu, which forms a sheltering abode for some fakirs during the festive season. The source of the river is enclosed by a stone basin, over which a small shrine of granite slabs is built. From this reservoir the pure water percolates into a tank of about 30 feet square, which by an outlet keeps the water to a level of 2½ feet. On two sides there are rough stone terraces scooped out of the hill side and above the third terrace on a dip of the hill there is a small square temple dedicated to Ganapati with a few huts close by for the abode of the residing Brahmin-pújáris.

At the moment, fixed by the Astrologer, of the sun's entering into the sign of Libra, whether by day or by night, the pilgrim, who is anxious to experience the full power of the sin cleansing bath, must descend into the holy tank. With the approach of the hour an ever increasing multitude surrounds the tank, impatiently waiting for the propitious moment. Now the priest gives the sign and the living throng, old and young, men and women rush in wild confusion into the water, duck three times and drink as often of the water, and, on emerging, offer a small gift to the priests, who sit near the shrine, receive the money and pour some pure water over the devotee's head. Before leaving, most of the pilgrims fill a hollow reed (Wóte) with water from the sacred spring and carry it home for the benefit of their relatives, and for purifying their wells. The effectual bathing season lasts for a whole month but with decreasing virtue. From 8 to 15,000 pilgrims may annually visit Tala-Káwéri, but the interest in the place seems to be on the decrease. The presiding Brahmins have secured some jungle for coffee cultivation in the neighbourhood of the temple, and the Coorgs complain, that the priests take greater care of their coffee gardens than of

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

896 893 [177]

c. **The Bhagavati-feast.**

Of the two lesser annual festivals one, the Bhagavati-feast, has been introduced by Tulu Brahmans, or, if it was originally a Coorg observance, has been thoroughly brahmanized.

It takes place during the two months preceding the monsoon. Different localities differ in the time of its celebration. Two or three villages have one Bhagavati temple in common, and support it jointly. These temples are in charge of Brahmans entirely. Tulu Brahmans hold the livings; with them some Padárthis, a lower class of Brahmans, who wear no holy string, are associated as musicians to Bhagavati. The whole establishment is under the management of some Tantri-Brahmans in the Tulu country, who come every eighth or tenth year, to consecrate idols and to collect money. On these occasions large sums are offered by the superstitious. The Coorgs have an extraordinary dread of the power of these men. They say, that if one of the Tantri-Brahmans be offended and curse a man, he will lose his sight or hearing or even his life. It is enough, they believe, for one of these masters of the black art, to say to a man: "do you not see?" or "do you not hear?" and the poor fellow is doomed to blindness or deafness, or even death. Strange! It would appear, that the common worship of the great gods of the country was less degrading to the mind, and engendered a more cheerful kind of superstition, than this wild sort of idolatry, which has enslaved the poor Coorgs. The Tantrics, on one of their visits, will gather some two or three hundred rupees from the money-loving Coorgs. Sometimes an idol of Bhagavati has lost its power, when they re-enliven it. Or the officiating Brahman, who has played the possessed on festival days, has died. The Tantri has to appoint his successor. These services are not performed gratuitously; the presiding Tantri receives every year one half of the profits of the establishment, through a curate whom he leaves in charge.

[346] [794] [754]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

796 793 787 Some Coorg also is chosen as a subject for possession by Bhagavati. He likewise, and his successors, must be instituted by the ruling Tantri. They are selected from a small number of candidates presented by the community connected with the temple. The Tantri takes one of the men, pronounces some mantra and puts holy ashes upon his face, when immediately the individual commences to shake and to dance and to speak as one possessed.

346 793 794 Every house of the villages, connected with a temple, must pay an assessment in rice every year to the Brahmans employed, and money must be offered by every family, from 3 as. to one rupee, on the last day of the annual festival.

796 793 The Bhagavati-feast lasts nine days. During the first six days, every morning and evening, the idol is carried three times round the temple in procession, while the Tantri-curate, who is the chief authority in the place, performs púja, strewing rice and minced leaves of Calyptanthes Caryophyllifolia, mixed together, on the stones placed towards the eight regions of the heavens, and mumbling his mantras. One of the Tulu Brahmans carries the idol on his head; he is accompanied by the Pújári and the other officers of the shrine, followed by the band of Padárthis, playing the drum, cymbal and gong, and preceded by the Coorg-man performing a frantic dance in the ecstasy of demoniac possession. Many people come on these occasions to put questions to Bhagavati in behalf of sick persons, or for the discovery of thieves, etc. which are duly answered by the Coorg spokesman of the goddess.

[786] [787]

796 786 [793] On the evening of the sixth day things take a more excited aspect. Now the Brahman idol-carrier also is seized with the strange inspiration. He dances and trembles, and answers questions by making signs only. On the same afternoon a crowd of Holeyas, who have finished the Pannangalamma-feast (a corresponding Holeya festival) come to the

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

712 8 feet thick and outside from 15 to 20 feet high with parapets 2 feet thick and 5 feet high. The fortress is an irregular hexagon and nearly conforms to the shape of the hill top, leaving enough space for a ditch all round and on the north side for a glacis. At its 6 corners there are bastions and the whole is built of strong masonry. The entrance on the east is intricate and circuitous and guarded by 3 successive gates, which close in the space, that is now occupied by public buildings the Jail, the Taluq-Subadar's, the Assistant Superintendent's and the Superintendent's Courts with the local
(178) Treasury. On the left side of the third gate there is a shrine erected against the wall, dedicated to Ganapati, the lord of hosts, whose image is daily worshipped by a Brahmin and who gets the first offerings, flowers and cocoanuts by Hindu devotees, because all who wish to prosper should begin their undertaking in Ganésha's name, and in former days it was not so dangerless for a Coorg to present himself before the Rája, as it is now before the British Superintendent! The fantastic superstructure has been added about 20 years ago by a devoted ministry who had been engaged in the building of the Fraserpet-Bridge, and who must have made large profits, to spend his money so lavishingly. Within the fort itself, there is in the centre the palace, to the left and in front of it the English Church, to the right the Quarter-guard and
• 346 armoury and behind the palace the powder magazine. The
712 English Church stands near the place which was formerly
797 occupied by a temple dedicated to Vírabhadra and which was demolished in 1855 to make room for the Church. The latter was built by the Rev. A. Fennell in 1856-57 by private subscriptions, the Church Building Society and Government assistance and consecrated in April 1858 by Bishop Dealtry. It is a remarkably neat structure in plain Gothic style, having a tower surmounted with a low spire. From its position and elevation it is a conspicuous object from whatever side Mercara

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

is viewed. Its interior is light and chaste, the fittings,—chiefly the handiwork of the Rev. Mr. Fennell—in remarkably good taste and the whole much set off by ground glass windows, with apex and borders of coloured glass, that at the east end being of larger size, of a more elaborate design and extremely elegant. The interior contains also an ornamental monument in white marble by Westmacott to the memory of the late Major Frank Vardon and a circular tablet in memory of Mrs. Barclay, the wife of Dr. Chr. Barclay.

The *Fort at Kushálanagara* (Fraserpet) built by Tippu Sultan was taken by the Coorgs in June 1789 under Dodda-Virájender, who sacked and burnt the place. When in 1846-1848 the fine bridge over the Kávéri was constructed, the ruins of the Fort supplied excellent building material.

The *Fortress at Arméri* in Beppunád was razed to the ground in August 1789.

Bhágamandala Fort, where Tippu seized some 5,000 Coorgs with their families whom he sent into Mysore in 1785 and forcibly made Mussulmans, was invested by Dodda-Virájender in 1790 and taken after 5 days' siege. The Rája himself fired the first cannon from the hill of Mumbáratu. During the bombardment 3 copper tiles of the Dévastána were destroyed by a cannon shot, but Dodda-Virájender replaced them by 4 tiles made of silver.

The *Pápára Fort*, (Pálu-páre) on the Kire river, a tributary of the Lakshmanatírtha, in Hatgatnád in Kiggatnád taluq, in which there are also the ruins of a temple, is said to have been built by *Kolli-Ninga* and *Benne-Krishna* of the Bedaru or hunter-tribe. It was destroyed by Tippu Sultan's armies and its ruins are extensive.

8. THE COORG LANGUAGE AND ITS LITERATURE.

The prevalent and official language in Coorg is Canarese, but this small mountain clan, the Coorgs, with their former

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

and the Mercara Central School with boarding establishments for Coorg boys and girls. 871 177

The number of *Vernacular district-schools* was raised to 25 and the teachers, nearly all of them Coorgs, were trained by the Principal four at a time for 3 or 4 months at the Central School, which served as a Normal School. After a successful examination the teachers' former pittance of Rs. 2½ per mensem was increased to a monthly salary of Rs. 7 with the prospect of Rs. 12 p. m. after five years' satisfactory service. The remodelled Schools were placed under the control of the Principal, who under the immediate orders of the Director of Public Instruction is also Inspector of the Coorg Schools. Once in 3 or 4 months all the teachers assemble in Mercara for a conference with the Principal to give an oral report in each other's presence on the state of their work and to receive further instruction in educational topics. 872 875

The school-houses are ordinary native buildings, erected by the ryots who also keep them in good repairs and therefore no school-fees are collected from the scholars. 346 872

The lessons, taught in the Canarese language, comprise: reading of manuscript papers and of the prescribed printed prose and poetical books, the latter being a collection of extracts from the best native authors; elementary arithmetic with the current weights and measures; copy-writing and dictation, composition; a short geography and history of Coorg and of India and the map of the world. 972

It is a most pleasing feature, that nearly one-tenth of the number of pupils is made up of Coorg-girls who in their lessons advance equally with the boys and who are not unfrequently quicker in their answers.

The total number of scholars in these 25 schools amounted on the 31st March 1870 to 1158 of whom 890 were Coorgs, including 92 girls. [162]

The *Anglo-vernacular Schools*, three of which have been